The Last Unicorn (film)

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The Last Unicorn is a 1982 American-British animated fantasy film about a brave unicorn and a magician who fight an evil king who is obsessed with attempting to capture all the world's unicorns.

Directed by Jules Bass and Arthur Rankin. Written by Peter S. Beagle, based on his novel The Last Unicorn.

There's Magic in Believing!taglines

I'm always dreaming, even when I'm awake; it is never finished.

Unicorn / Lady Amalthea

- **I am the only Unicorn there is? The Last?** … That *cannot* be. Why would I be the last? **What do men know? Because they have seen no unicorns for a while does not mean we have all *vanished*. *We do not vanish.* … There has never been a time without unicorns. We live forever! We are as old as the sky, old as the moon! We can be hunted, trapped; we can even be killed if we leave our forests, but we do not *vanish*. … Am I truly the last?**
- Please, all I want to know is if you've seen other unicorns like me somewhere in the world.
- I could never leave this forest, but I *must* know if I'm the only unicorn left in the world! Suppose they're hiding together... somewhere far away? What if they're waiting for me? In need of my help? … I must go quickly, and come back as soon as I can.
- Mare? *Mare?* I — a *horse!* Is *that* what you take me for? Is *that* what you see? … **I have forgotten that men cannot see Unicorns.** If men no longer know what they're looking at, there may well be other unicorns in the world yet — unknown — and glad of it.
- Do not boast, old woman. Your death sits in that cage, and she hears you.
  - To Mommy Fortuna
- **Don't look back, and don't run. You must never run from anything immortal; it attracts their attention.**
  - To Schmendrick, as the harpy Celaeno kills Mommy Fortuna
- **I can never regret. I can feel *sorrow*, but it's not the same thing.**
  - To Schmendrick, on the morning after escaping from The Midnight Carnival
- I wish you had let the Red Bull take me! I wish you had left me to the harpy! I can feel this body *DYING* all around me!
  - After magic transforms her into a woman.
- **But, I am always dreaming, even when I'm awake; it is never finished.**
- *Molly, who am I? Why am I here? What is it that I am seeking in this strange place, day after day? I knew a moment ago, but I have forgotten.*
- Everything dies! I want to die when YOU die!
- Unicorns are in the world again. No sorrow will live in me as long as that joy, save one...and I thank you for that part, too.
  - To Schmendrick
- Once, I can't remember, I was long ago, someone strange. I was innocent and wise, and full of pain. Now that I'm a woman, everything has changed. Once, when I was searching, somewhere out of reach, far away, in a place I could not find, or heart obey. Now that I'm a woman, everything is strange.

There has never been a time without unicorns. We live forever! We are as old as the sky, old as the moon!

Schmendrick the Magician

- I am Schmendrick, the Magician, the last of the Red Hot Swamis!
- **It's a very rare person who is taken for what he truly is.**
- You deserve the services of a great wizard, but I'm afraid you'll have to be glad of aid of a second-rate pickpocket.
- Be rary of wousing a wizard's wrath — rousing a rizard's — Be wary of making a magician angry! If I chose, I could turn you into a frog!
- Magic, do as you will! Magic, do as you will!
- Oh, God! I'm engaged to a Douglas fir!
  - After transforming the tree he was tied to.
- Haggard has them all now, drifting on the waves to his delight. All but one, and that one is the Lady Amalthea.
- **Don't cry. If you have become human enough to cry, then all the magic in the world cannot change you back.**
- She will remember your heart when men are fairy tales, and books are written by rabbits.
- There are no happy endings because nothing ever ends.

I can never regret. I can feel *sorrow*, but it's not the same thing.

King Haggard

- You are losing my interest, and that is very dangerous.
- What is the matter with your eyes? Why can I not see myself, in your eyes?
- There. There they are! There they are!! They're mine! They belong to me! The Red Bull gathered them for me one by one, and I made him drive each one into the sea! Now they live there. And every tide carries them within an easy step of the land, but they dare *not* come out of the water! They are afraid of the Red Bull. I like to watch them. They fill me with joy. The first I felt it I thought I was going to die. I said to the Red Bull I must have them, all of them, all there are. For nothing makes me happy but their shining and their grace. So the Red Bull caught them. Each time I see the unicorns, my unicorns, it is like that morning in the woods and I am truly young, in spite of myself.
  - On his captive unicorns.
- I know you! I almost knew you as soon as I saw you on the road coming to my door. Since then, there is no movement of yours that has not betrayed you! A pace, a glance, a turn of the head, the flash of your throat as you breathe... even your way of standing perfectly still — they were all my spies!
- Do you still deny yourself? Do you dare still pretend to be human? I'll hurl you down to the others with my own hands if you dare deny yourself!
- The last! I knew you were the last!
  - Realizing Amalthea had indeed been a unicorn.

Others

- **Celaeno**: *[to the Unicorn]* Set me free. We are sisters, you and I.
- **Mabruk**: *[after realizing that the Lady Amalthea is a unicorn]* Haggard, I would not be you for all the world. You have let your doom in by the front door, but it will not depart that way! Farewell, poor Haggard!
- **Rukh**: This here is the manticore. A man's head, a lion's body, tail of a scorpion. Creatures of night, brought to light. Here is a dragon. Breathes fire now and then. Mostly people who poke it, little boy. Its inside an inferno, but its skin so cold, it burns! Speaks 17 languages badly and is subject to gout. Creatures of night, brought to light! The Satyr. Ladies, keep back!
- **The Cat**: No cat out of its first fur was ever deceived by appearances, unlike human beings, who seem to enjoy it.
- **The Cat**: When the wine drinks itself, when the skull speaks, when the clock strikes the right time, only then will you find the tunnel that leads to the Red Bull. There be a trick to it, of course.
- **The Skull**: To get to the Red Bull's chamber, you have to walk through time. A clock isn't time, it's just numbers and springs. Pay it no mind.

Don't cry. If you have become human enough to cry, then all the magic in the world cannot change you back.

Dialogue

Older Hunter: I mislike the feel of these woods. Creatures that live in a Unicorn's forest learn a little magic of their own in time, mainly concerned with disappearing.
Younger Hunter: Unicorns? I thought they only existed in fairy tales. This is a forest, like any other... *isn't it?*
Older Hunter: Then why do the leaves never fall here? Or the snow? Why is it always spring here? I tell you there is one unicorn left in the world, and as long as it lives in this forest we'll find no game to hunt here.
Younger Hunter: Let's turn around, hunt somewhere else.
Older Hunter: Stay where you are, poor beast. This is no world for you! Stay in your forest and keep your trees green, and your friends protected. And good luck to you, for you are the last!
Unicorn: I am the only unicorn there is? The Last...?

Unicorn: Say my name then. If you know my name, tell it to me.
Butterfly: *[quoting Romeo and Juliet]* Your name is a golden bell hung in my heart. I would break my body to pieces to call you once by your name...!
Unicorn: Say it, if you know.
Butterfly: Rumpelstiltskin! Gotcha!
Unicorn: I should know better to expect a silly butterfly to know my name! All butterflies know are songs, and poetry, and anything else they hear. I guess you mean well. Fly away, Butterfly!
Butterfly: One, two, three, O'Leary..
Butterfly: Listen. Don't listen to ME, *listen*. You can find the others if you are brave. They passed down all the roads long ago, and the Red Bull ran close behind them and covered their footprints. Listen! Listen, listen QUICKLY!
Unicorn: *I AM* listening! Where did they go and what is the Red Bull?
Butterfly: Listen! LISTEN! *[laughs]* The king is in his counting house, counting out, counting out, counting...

Schmendrick: Tell me what you see. Don't be afraid. Look at your fellow legends and tell me what you see.
Unicorn: What he calls a manticore looks to be no more than a shabby, toothless lion. And he has them believing that poor old ape with the twisted foot is a satyr! Illusions, deceptions, mirages! Your Mommy Fortuna cannot truly change things!
Schmendrick: That's true. She can only disguise, and only for those eager to believe whatever comes easiest. … No, She cannot turn cream into butter, but she can make a lion look like a manticore to eyes that want to see a manticore. Just like she put a false horn, on a real unicorn, so they could see the unicorn. I know you. If I were blind, I would know what you are.
Unicorn: Who are you?
Schmendrick: I am called Schmendrick, the Magician. Uh... you won't have heard of me. I entertain the sight-seers as they gather for the show. It's not much of a job for a real magician, but I've had worse.
Unicorn *[seeing the harpy]*: That one is real. That is the harpy Celaeno.
Schmendrick: Yes, the old woman caught her by chance, asleep, just as she took you. Oh, she should never have meddled with a real harpy — or a real unicorn for that matter. Because the truth melts her magic, always. She is going to free herself very soon now and she must not catch you uncaged.
Rukh: Move away from there! You know what she told you!
Schmendrick: Don't be afraid; Schmendrick is with you. Do nothing 'til you hear from me.

Mommy Fortuna: The harpy's as real as you are, and just as immortal. And she was just as easy to capture, if you want to know.
Unicorn: Do not boast, old woman. Your death sits in that cage, and she hears you.
Mommy Fortuna: Oh, she'll kill me one day or another. But she will remember forever that I caught her; I held her prisoner. So there's my immortality, eh? Ha! Ha! Now, you were out on the road, hunting for your own death, and I know where it awaits you. I know HIM, that one..
Unicorn: Do you speak of the Red Bull? Tell me, if you do, and where he is, if you know!
Mommy Fortuna: The Red Bull of King Haggard...so you know of the Bull! Well, he'll not have you! You belong to me.
Unicorn: You know better... Keep your poor shadows, if you will, but let me go, and, let her go. I cannot see her caged. She is real, like me. We are two sides of the same magic… The harpy and me, we are not for you.
Mommy Fortuna: Who are you for then? Do you think those fools knew you, without any help from me? Ha ha ha! No! I had to give you a horn they could see! Ha ha! These days it takes a cheap carnival trick to make folk recognize a real unicorn. But, the Red Bull will know you when he sees you, so you are safer here! You should thank me for protecting you!

Schmendrick: Take me with you, for luck, for laughs, for the unknown...
Unicorn: You may come with me, if you like, though I wish you'd asked for some other reward for having freed me.
Schmendrick: I thought about it. But you couldn't granted my true wish.
Unicorn: No. I cannot turn you into something you are not. I cannot turn you into a true magician.
Schmendrick: Ah, it's ok. Don't worry about it.
Unicorn: I'm not.

Molly Grue: No, it can't be. Can it be? Where have you been? *Where have you been? Damn you! Where have you been?*
Schmendrick: Don't you talk to her that way!
Unicorn: I'm here now.
Molly Grue: And where were you twenty years ago? Ten years ago? Where were you when I was new? When I was one of those innocent young maidens you always come to? How dare you! How dare you come to me now, when I am this! *[Weeps]*
Schmendrick: Can you really see her? Do you know what she is?
Molly Grue: If you had been waiting to see a unicorn, as long as I have...
Schmendrick: She's the last unicorn in the world.
Molly Grue: It would be the last unicorn in the world that came to Molly Grue. … It's all right, I forgive you.

Molly Grue: *[as the Red Bull attacks the unicorn]* Please! Please do something!
Schmendrick: What can I do? Do you think the Red Bull likes card tricks? If I could, I would change her into some other creature, some beast too humble for the Bull to be concerned with. But that would take a real magician with real magic, and I can't pretend anymore...
Molly Grue: But you do. You have magic. Maybe you can't find it, but it's there. You called Robin Hood, and there is no Robin Hood. You have all the power you need if you dared to look for it.

Schmendrick: The Red Bull came for a unicorn, so she had to become something else. The magic chose the shape, not I. I am a *bearer*, I am a *dwelling*, I am a *messenger*…
Molly Grue: You are an idiot! Do you hear me? You've lost her! You've trapped her in a human body! She'll go mad!

Molly Grue: Why won't you help me? Why must you always speak in riddles?
The Cat: Because I be, what I be. I would tell you what you want to know if I could, mum, but I be a cat. And no cat anywhere, *ever* gave anyone a straight answer.

Amalthea: Don't!
Haggard: I will not touch you. What are you looking at?
Amalthea: The sea.
Haggard: Ah yes, the sea is always good. There is nothing I can look at for very long, except the sea.

Lír: You were dreaming, my Lady.
Amalthea: But I am always dreaming, even when I am awake! It is never finished. I will not trouble you, my Lord Prince.
Lír: Trouble me, please, trouble me! I would court you with more grace, if I knew how. I only wish you wanted something of me..
Amalthea: Drown out my dreams! Keep me from remembering, whatever wants me to remember it!

Amalthea: Lír! Don't let him change me! The Red Bull has no care for human beings. We may walk out past him and get away!
Schmendrick: If we do that, then all the unicorns of the world will remain prisoners forever, except one, and she will grow old and die.
Amalthea: Everything dies! I want to die when you die. *[looks at Lír]* I'm no unicorn, no magical creature. I'm a woman, and I love you! Don't let him! Lír, I will not love you when I'm a unicorn.
Lír: Amalthea, don't...
Schmendrick: Then let the quest end here! I don't think I could change you back, even if you wished it. Marry the prince, and live happily ever after.
Amalthea: Yes, that is my wish.
Lír: No. My lady, I am a hero, and heroes know that things must happen when it is time for them to happen. A quest may not simply be abandoned; unicorns may go unrescued for a long time, but not forever. A happy ending cannot come in the middle of the story.
Molly Grue: But what if there isn't a happy ending?
Schmendrick: There are no happy endings, because nothing ends.
Molly Grue: Schmendrick, let her stay the way she is. Let her be...
Schmendrick: That's not in the story. Lír knows that, and so does she.
Molly Grue: You don't care! You don't care what happens to her or to the others, just so you become a real magician, at last. You don't care —
Schmendrick: Well I wish I didn't care! I wish to God I didn't care about anything but my magic! But I do! I do.

Lír *[as the Red Bull chases the Unicorn]*: Do something! You have the power! I will *kill* you if you don't do something.
Schmendrick: I cannot, not all the magic in the world can help her now.
Molly Grue: Then what is magic for? What is the use of wizardry if it cannot even save a unicorn?
Schmendrick: That's what *heroes* are for.
Lír: Of course — that is *exactly* what heroes are for.

Lír: I wish I could see her just once more, so I could tell her all that's in my heart. She will never know what I really meant to say.
Schmendrick: She will remember your heart when men are fairy tales in books written by rabbits. Of *all* unicorns, she is the only one who knows what regret is — and *love*.

Unicorn: You are a true wizard now, as you always wished. Does it make you happy?
Schmendrick: Well, men don't always know when they're happy. But I — I think so. And you?
Unicorn: I am a little afraid to go home. I have been mortal, and some part of me is mortal yet. I am no longer like the others, for no unicorn was ever born who could regret, but I now I *do*. I regret.
Schmendrick: I am sorry. I have done you evil and I cannot undo it.
Unicorn: No. Unicorns are in the world again. No sorrow will live in me as long as that joy — save one. And I thank you for that part, too. Farewell good magician. I will try to go home.

Title song

"The Last Unicorn", written by Jimmy Webb, performed by America; Opening sequence (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VxoJLJx-mJw), 2005 performance by America (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bvM-nZaTtw), Cover by Loreena McKennit (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IycWPksv0Bw), Cover by In-Mood, featuring Juliette (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cywqe59VNyY)

- ♪ When the last eagle flies over the last crumbling mountain
  And the last lion roars at the last dusty fountain
  In the shadow of the forest though she may be old and worn
  They will stare unbelieving at the last unicorn. ♪
-

♪ When the first breath of winter through the flowers is icing
And you look to the north and a pale moon is rising
And it seems like all is dying and would leave the world to mourn
In the distance hear the laughter of the last unicorn... ♪

I'm alive, I'm alive! ♪

- ♪ When the last moon is cast over the last star of morning
  and the future has passed without even a last desperate warning
  then look into the sky where through the clouds a path is worn
  look and see her how she sparkles, its the last unicorn…

I'm alive! I'm alive! ♪

In the distance hear the laughter of the last unicorn…

I'm alive, I'm alive!

Taglines

- There's Magic in Believing!
- A Treasured Fantasy Classic of Incomparable Charm!
- The Magical Fantasy Adventure Based on the Bestselling Book.
- *[from trailer]* She is a creature of legend. In an age of sorcery and savagery, demons and dragons, she may be... The Last Unicorn.

Cast

- Mia Farrow - The Unicorn / Lady Amalthea
- Alan Arkin - Schmendrick the magician
- Jeff Bridges - Prince Lír
- Tammy Grimes - Molly Grue
- Robert Klein - The Butterfly
- Angela Lansbury - Mommy Fortuna
- Christopher Lee - King Haggard
- Brother Theodore - Rukh

Quotes about *The Last Unicorn*

- ***The Last Unicorn* is an unusual children's film in many respects, the chief one being that it is unusually good.** This animated fable also features a cast that would do any live-action film proud, a visual style noticeably different from that of other children's fare, and a story filled with genuine sweetness and mystery. Children, except perhaps for very small ones, ought to be intrigued by it; adults won't be bored. And no one of any age will be immune to the sentiment of the film's final moments, which really are unexpectedly touching and memorable.
  - Janet Maslin, in "*Last Unicorn*, An Animated Fable" in *The New York Times* (19 November 1982) (https://movies.nytimes.com/movie/review?_r=2&res=9D03E2D8123BF93AA25752C1A964948260&partner=Rotten%20Tomatoes&oref=slogin&oref=login)

External links

- Original trailer at YouTube (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t-UpwWauZ50)
- 25th Anniversary trailer (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CXjwRIDEOi0)
- *The Last Unicorn* (https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0084237/quotes) quotes at the Internet Movie Database
- *The Last Unicorn* (http://www.allmovie.com/work/28398) at Allmovie
- *The Last Unicorn* (http://www.boxofficemojo.com/movies/?id=lastunicorn.htm) at Mojo
- *The Last Unicorn* (http://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/last_unicorn/) at Rotten Tomatoes
- *The Last Unicorn* FAQ (http://utd500.utdallas.edu/~hairston/lufaq.html)

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